

Security vs. Customer Service: The Transition to a Federally Run Airline

Security Industry

An Honors Thesis

By

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A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Brodt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'S' and 'B'.

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Abstract

Terrorism has become a central focus of American Society over the past two years. Since the United States was brutally attacked on September 11, 2001, people are now mainly concerned with the security of our nations airlines. In order to better protect airline passengers and crew, the federal government has taken over the responsibility of screening individuals before they may board an aircraft. However, the change from a privately controlled to a federally controlled security workforce has left many wondering if the transition will have its proposed effect. This project focuses on the specifics of the changeover as well as provides analysis of the overall process as it currently transpires.

Acknowledgements

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Security vs. Customer Service: The Transition to a Federally Run Airline Security

Industry

On Friday, March 7, 2003, I headed toward the Indianapolis Airport on my way to the Florida Keys for spring break. Though some in society still fear airline travel following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, I was not concerned. I had flown a few months prior to this and was surprised with the thoroughness and efficiency of the airport screeners. On top of this proficiency, screeners I encountered were extremely polite and empathetic to passenger needs.

After parking my car, I boarded the shuttle bus for the long trip to the terminal. Once seated, I noticed an Arab gentleman and his female companion had also entered the bus. She quickly found a seat, however, the Arab gentleman appeared reluctant to take the only remaining seat, next to me. I offered the seat to him and, upon taking it, he and I exchanged pleasantries. Throughout the trip to the terminal I noticed many of the passengers eyeing him suspiciously. Upon seeing this I began to wonder what difficulties he might encounter as he made his way through the airport checkpoint and on toward his flight. As it turned out, this couple was aboard my flight and were seated several rows from my location. Unfortunately, the questionable looks he received from individuals on board again had me speculating about his encounter with the screeners. Was he stopped and searched and if so, was it random or was it because of his race? Inadequacies in airport security have been blamed for the September 11th terrorist attacks and a major aspect of this security is the screeners themselves.

Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, a growing concern of Americans was airport security. Considering the nature of the terrorist attacks, fear of airline safety ran rampant throughout society. At first, people were afraid to fly the so called "friendly skies". Thus, airport security was one of the first things delineated. According to the Elkhart Truth, the Transportation Security Administration hired security experts to examine South Bend Regional Airport. These experts helped investigate the airport's passenger screening system as well as prepare them "to replace private security companies with a government trained and paid work force at airport checkpoints" (Mark). For the months that followed the attacks, fear appeared to have taken over society. There was a tremendous decline in travel by passenger airplanes. Yet, as time passed, the fear subsided and people began to fly once again. New security laws were passed and airport security was tightened. Airport screeners began using more strict methods of threat detection. More personnel were added to the screening line and they began to screen individuals more thoroughly. The main issue surrounding airport security was the fact that it was privatized. Security at major airports around the country was run by different private security companies. This was seen as a major flaw in the overall safety of passengers. Critics around the country believed that private security companies were not as capable of being held accountable for their actions as the government could be. That is why on November 19, 2002 the federal government took over the job of maintaining security at the nation's airports (Morrison, "Feds"). Unfortunately, many individuals are now concerned that the federal government is not up to the challenge of protecting airline passengers.

In order to alleviate the fear passengers are feeling, some airlines are providing travelers with relaxation tapes. These tapes encourage breathing exercises and allow the listener to hear various relaxing sounds such as the ocean (Adams, "Fliers"). However, fears of international travel are not as easily soothed. As the war in Iraq continues, airlines are finding fewer and fewer travelers. According to USA Today, "Wall Street airline analysts say virtually all airlines with trans-Atlantic routes are reporting soft international trip bookings" (Adams, "Fliers"). People are afraid that the war in Iraq will anger the Middle-Eastern community and will likely result in an increase in international terrorism. Thus, people are reluctant to travel outside of the United States.

According to the November 18, 2002 edition of USA today, only 15 % of the screeners who were employed by private security companies were given positions working as federal screeners (Morrison, "Feds"). Many of the private security employees were dismissed from their screening positions because they did not meet the federal government's standards. However, just because they did not meet the federal governments standards does not mean they were not able to do the job effectively and efficiently. Many of the employees were dismissed because they did not meet the federal governments screening criteria of being United States citizens. Screeners who might have been more adept at performing the screening function were dismissed.

However, just two months after taking over airport security, the federal government is being accused of failing to sufficiently protect passengers. "The nation's 159 international airports remain vulnerable to illegal entry by foreign terrorists and smugglers because the Immigration and Naturalization Service has not followed security recommendations made four years ago," according to USA Today (Locy). It is also

contended that the federal screeners at our nation's airports have proven to be more adept at finding "prohibited items" that individuals are attempting to smuggle onto various flights (Morrison, "Feds"). Regardless of their successes, critics are worried that the airline security's new focus on customer service will severely distract them from fully protecting passengers.

While the controversy over airport security struggles on, airlines are continuously attempting to cut costs in order to avoid bankruptcy. According to the New York Times, "the carriers are pursuing a Kubrickian universe in which customers will buy tickets over the Internet, pick up boarding passes at self-service kiosks and flash an encoded "trusted traveler" card to walk through security scanners" (Wong). Another example of this reliance on technology can be seen in Delta Airlines 90-second check-in policy.

According to USA Today, by the end of year 2003, Delta is going to replace ticket counters at most of the nations major airports with self-service machines that allow passengers to check-in without the assistance of ticket counter agents (Woodyard). This will help reduce the length of time people wait in line to check-in, which can be as much as two hours. However, this type of check-in is a prime example of eliminating the successful security measure of human interaction. Tighter, stricter security and faster service are the two main concerns of airline customers. It appears that these two passenger concerns are in conflict. Tighter security implicitly demands more time. This in turn would cause service to customers to be drastically slowed. If airline customers want the faster service, then it is likely they would have to make concessions in regards to the extent of security they desire. What it comes down to is the values of customers as a whole. It must be determined whether people require better security or do they value the

— faster service. Airline and airport administrators are attempting to combine the two, but there is still some concern that this will be a successful venture. Yet, there are still concerns that the most important aspect of security, human interaction, is being eliminated (Wong). There are no guarantees that the new technology will work. Computers that are supposed to “red flag” certain individuals who pose a threat could possibly fail. Quicker check-ins allow for individuals to slip through security unattested. A human being would be able to verify a person’s identification visually and prevent that person from boarding an airplane. Security personnel can be trained to do things that computers and other machines cannot. Humans are able to detect a person acting suspiciously or if a person does not belong in a particular area. Although this can lead to discrimination and racial profiling, the advantages of human interaction (i.e. finding weapons or explosives before they can be brought onto an airplane) can be thought to outweigh the disadvantages. As we continue through the technological age, we continuously rely on technology to help fix our problems. Unfortunately, the use of this new technology could end up being detrimental to airport security.

— This all comes at a time when Delta and many of the other airlines are decreasing their work force. This is going to lead to even less human interaction, leaving passengers more vulnerable. This is where the conflict of expedient customer service and customer safety come from. Airlines desire to increase business and productivity by speeding up their procedure and pleasing customers. However, there is still concern that “the need for speed” will end up being detrimental to customer safety.

— As society demands an increase in airline security, congressional leaders are looking to raise the airline security fee to cover increasing security costs. At the same

time airlines are looking to the federal government to provide them with financial assistance to prevent them from going out of business. According to USA Today, the current round-trip fee would be increased from \$10 to \$20 (Levin). However, airlines fear this increased fee will contribute to the reduction in air travel. Consequently, airline unions are beginning to make pay concessions in order to keep these businesses from going bankrupt. According to USA Today, United Airlines pilots union “tentatively agreed to about \$1 billion a year in pay cuts” (Adams, “United”). Without these concessions, airlines could possibly be unable to produce enough money to continue their daily operations.

To add to the mounting costs airlines are facing, US News and World Report has stated that “government demands” are causing them to lose money. The government is forcing airlines to reserve two first-class tickets for air marshals (Bedard). This could cost airlines as much as \$5 million a month. While air marshals are a necessary part of airline security, by taking up two first-class seats on every flight the government is contributing to the financial difficulties the airlines are facing. Not to mention, from a security standpoint, by demanding these first-class seats the federal government is telling everyone in what section of the plane the air marshals will be located. This could create extremely dangerous situations. Additionally, air marshals are claiming that administrators are putting passengers in more danger in their attempt to provide air marshals on every commercial flight (Morrison, “Air”). According to USA Today, planes are sometimes only provided with one air marshal (Morrison, “Air”). This leaves flights open to an increasing threat from multiple terrorists.

— In the months that followed the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, society's main concerns fell upon airport security. Thus, "on November 19, 2001, the President signed into law the Aviation and Transportation Security Act, which among other things established a new Transportation Security Administration" (TSA: Law and Policy). The TSA is responsible for ensuring the security of various modes of transportation; the most significant being airport and airline security. It is the TSA that prescribes what actions airports must take to ensure public safety. They decide what items are allowed past security checkpoints and onto planes. They also prescribe the procedures screeners must use and what conduct screeners are allowed to pursue in order to prevent individuals from boarding an aircraft with a prohibited item.

— As the military campaign began in Iraq, the United States raised its terrorism alert to orange as the threat of terrorist attacks increases. Raising the alert to orange increases the security at major establishments across the nation, especially at airports. The Transportation Security Administration ordered airports to, "increase police presence inside terminals, around runways and on roadways and to conduct random inspections of vehicles driving to terminals" (Goo). Unfortunately, these added security measures are adding substantial costs that airports are forced to bear, though it is unclear how much of this cost will be picked up by the federal government. Directors of various airports were concerned that if the terrorist threat level was increased to the highest level, Red, and more stringent security measures were required, they might not be able to "operate its regular schedule of flights (Goo).

— According to USA Today, raising the security alert to orange is bringing fear back into traveler's lives (Adams, "Fliers"). From bomb-sniffing dogs to National Guard

soldiers patrolling the grounds, going to the airport can begin to feel like entering a war zone. People are having their shoes X-rayed and at the Dallas/Fortworth airport, police are inspecting every vehicle. As cars enter the property, “police are using mirrors to check under vehicles for explosives” (Adams, “Fliers”). Furthermore, even small, local airports are increasing their security.

Fear of terrorism is taking over everyday operations of air travel. However, according to USA Today, as of April 18, 2003, the Dallas/Fort Worth airport has suspended its required vehicle inspections (Maxwell). They still reserve the right to inspect a vehicle if they feel the situation warrants the search, however, they are no longer examining every vehicle that enters their property. This particular airport also had closed over 1000 of their parking spaces because they were close to the terminals, and there was a fear that a terrorist would be able to cause greater harm from those positions. Yet, as the terrorist threat level in the United States was lowered to the Yellow level, the airport has decided to reopen these spaces.

One of the reasons the orange alert had been so troublesome is because people are unsure of what actions to take. Robert Butterworth, a trauma psychologist, says that people usually relieve their distress by obtaining knowledge. Unfortunately, there is no way for people to know what is going to happen on an airplane. The government is unable to provide travelers with information regarding when and where a terrorist attack is going to take place. Thus, people are incapable of obtaining the knowledge necessary to alleviate their fears (Adams, “Fliers”).

In order to help travelers pass through checkpoints more quickly and efficiently, the TSA developed a website individuals can access to determine what security

checkpoints they will encounter (appendix A – Passenger Checkpoints) and what items are prohibited on airplanes as well as in the terminal (appendix B – Can I Take It With Me). The TSA website lists three security procedures a person must go through before they may board their plane. First, they must place all carry-on items, including jackets, on the conveyer belt which will pass these items through an X-ray machine. Second, individuals must pass through a metal detector (TSA – Passenger Checkpoints). If a person were to set off the metal detector, he or she would be required to go through the third security step, the secondary screening. In this step, the screener will pass a hand-wand metal detector over the individual's body in order to determine what may have set off the walk through metal detector. It is in this step in particular that screening personnel's customer service training comes into practice. The secondary screening creates a situation in which the traveler and the screener are forced to have close contact. In order to make the process easier for them and less uncomfortable for the customer, screeners must focus on the new customer service focus of the TSA. In order to sufficiently complete the inspection, the screener may use a pat-down search of the individual and ask them to remove their shoes.

While these procedures may appear intrusive, the TSA website points out that an individual "may request (their) search be conducted in private." Screeners also have the right to thoroughly search bags and ask passengers embarrassing questions (TSA – Passenger Checkpoints). In February 2003 the Federal Aviation Administration began testing procedures to have commuter airlines determine a passenger's weight before they are allowed on the plane (Clark). In order to do this, airlines would be required to ask a person to voluntarily give their weight as well as use various methods to determine a

passenger's weight, such as estimating an individual's weight. This new procedure stemmed from recent commuter airline crashes in which excessive weight in the plane was partially blamed for the accident. However, the FAA has ended the test due to questions about the accuracy of determining a passenger's weight (Clark).

The TSA has also changed the way passengers pick up their boarding passes and when they must show these passes to authorities. Travelers used to be able to pick up their tickets when they arrived at the gate, and they only had to show their boarding pass when they entered the gangplank to the plane. Yet, the recent changes stipulate passengers must present their boarding passes in order to proceed through the security checkpoint. However, the TSA claims this will actually make the entire security and boarding process simpler. Trials have been run to determine the effect of the change on passenger wait-time and it was found that passengers had to wait the same amount of time either way ("Airport Security"). Additionally, the change will allow security personnel to determine if an individual is actually boarding a plane and thus, is able to go beyond the security checkpoint.

Despite drawbacks of the screening procedures, critics and passengers alike, are increasingly pleased with the customer service screeners are providing. According to USA Today, this is due to the TSA's "heavy emphasis on customer-service principles" during screener training (Clark). Screeners complete "45 hours of classroom instruction and 60 hours of on-the-job training," where they are taught to "maintain eye contact," "and ask customers to do something rather than order them around" (Clark). Although this new orientation is a pleasing change to many people, there are those that believe the focus of customer security is being pushed aside. Some critics are saying that

concentrating more on customer service is relaxing security screener's focus, allowing individuals to illegally enter the country.

The TSA was very selective when it came to hiring individuals for the available screener positions. As stated earlier, only 15% of private security screeners were able to conform the TSA's criteria and maintain their employment (Morrison, "Feds"). According to USA Today, there were 1.6 million people who applied for positions. Only 100,000 people were interviewed and half of those people were actually hired (Clark). Another sign of the TSA's hiring success is the attrition rate of screeners. According to USA Today, when they were employed by private security companies, the attrition rate of screeners was between 100% and 200% per year. So far, under TSA supervision, the attrition rate is only 4% (Clark).

While many people appear to be relatively happy with the current state of airline security, members of Congress were skeptical of the progress. According to US News and World Report, undercover Congressional investigators were sent through airport security to determine its effectiveness and the results were astounding (Stein). These investigators "easily slipped into the United States using phony IDs" (Stein). Homeland Security Secretary, Tom Ridge, has recognized the problem and rearranged the structure of his agency in order to prevent this situation from occurring again. However, it is wondered whether simply rearranging government departments is going to be enough to prevent individuals from illegally entering the United States (Stein).

When it comes to prohibited items, the TSA is slowly allowing certain items back onto airplanes. Following the September 11th terrorist attacks, airline security became extremely tight, and there were severe restrictions on items passengers were allowed to

carry into an airport or on an airplane. Individuals who are not use to flying were continuously bringing prohibited items to airports. However, the items they are bringing to the airports are personal items that most people do not believe are weapons, such as tweezers. According to USA Today, the TSA is now allowing items such as “nailfiles, corkscrews, and tweezers,” to be carried onto flights. This is “meant to infuse a lot more common sense into the screening process,” according to the TSA (“Travels”).

While the TSA banned many items, they ultimately left the final decision of whether an item can be brought onto an airplane up to the screeners. Thus, a screener at New York’s LaGuardia airport may determine that the tweezers an individual is carrying are not sharp and therefore, not a weapon. Yet, a screener at the Indianapolis International Airport may find that those same tweezers are a dangerous weapon and confiscate the item. An individual may also be charged with a crime for carrying the tweezers to a security checkpoint even though screeners at another airport allowed the individual to pass through security with the tweezers.

In November of 2002, a shoulder-launched missile was fired at a plane in Kenya. This incident caused US officials to establish preventative measures to protect American passengers from such a terrorist attack. According to CNN.com, several steps will be taken at various airports including, “further restricting public access to airports and surrounding areas and increased patrols of airport perimeters” (Bohn). Despite the fact that there are no specific threats, the government feels that protective measures still need to be taken.

While airports are focusing on preventing violent terrorists from boarding planes, they are now taking precautions when it comes to the new illness circulating around Asia,

the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. Airlines around the world are preventing people who show signs of the illness from boarding aircraft. Despite the TSA claiming the SARS illness doesn't appear to be a terrorist act, airlines are still taking precautions. Without knowing the exact cause of the disease, the airline communities are fearful of allowing passengers who might have the disease to board. They are looking to prevent the spread of this deadly affliction ("Airports On Alert").

Another important security feature that is often overlooked is the personal involvement of passengers on the plane. Since September 11, 2001 passengers have become more protective of themselves and the airplane. If they see another passenger do something illegal or endanger the flight, they are now more likely to intervene and prevent devastating situations from taking place. For example, CNN.com reported that on January 11, 2003 a man aboard a Delta aircraft began smoking and became insubordinate. Passengers and flight attendants took action and detained the man until authorities were able to arrest him ("Plane Returns."). This is a sign that passengers and crew alike are going to be more diligent in their efforts to ensure their safety.

In order to assist airports and airlines in preventing dangerous individuals from boarding an aircraft, the FBI is placing names and pictures of individuals on a list which recommends airlines not allow these individuals on board. Recently, five men were placed on this list because the FBI wanted to question them ("Airport Alerted). Despite the lack of evidence against these men, airlines will still prevent them from flying and notify the FBI. This system is extremely useful in preventing dangerous individuals from entering an aircraft as well as apprehending these individuals when they attempt to go on board an airplane.

Another security measure that is raising a lot of controversy is currently in effect. The TSA has begun allowing pilots to carry firearms aboard flights. According to USA Today, pilots are currently being trained at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center and will soon be bringing guns into the cockpit (Bayles). Pilots who go through the federal classes will be, “deputized as federal law officers and authorized to use lethal force to defend their cockpits” (Bayles). This means that pilots will now be able to legally kill anyone who illegally enters their cockpit.

Although it is believed that this is a positive step towards enhancing airline security, there are some who believe arming pilots is not a good idea. First, it costs \$6,200.00 to equip and train a single pilot. Second, some members of the National Transportation Safety Board believe arming pilots creates a situation in which anything can happen (Bayles). Passenger’s lives could be in even greater danger if pilots are allowed to carry weapons on board their flights.

The TSA has established strict guidelines for using and transporting firearms. These include keeping firearms inside lockboxes and, when traveling as passengers, pilots must give the weapon to a person on the ground crew in order for the weapon to be safely stowed in the cargo hold (Bayles). However, even though the TSA has put these safety precautions into effect, many critics are still dismayed. There is no telling what may happen when an actual hijacking situation arises and the pilot aboard the plane is armed. Innocent passengers may be violently hurt in the ensuing conflict. Although it is also argued that without pilots being armed, the cockpit is left defenseless against an individual who is determined to take over the plane.

The most significant change since the terrorist attacks are the demands society as a whole have placed on the United States government. People have required the federal government to provide them extensive security measures when traveling via airplanes. However, a drastic problem has arisen between the public's need for security and their desire for a more expedient service. When the airlines provide customers with the technology to make the process of air travel faster, they are also opening up the door for security problems to occur. This is the federal government's biggest challenge. They must determine what security measures need to be taken in order to protect the public. Yet, they must also incorporate these new security measures into the ever-changing technological world.

However, the debate is ongoing as to whether or not the Transportation Security Administration is handling airport security as well as it could be. It has only been six months since the newly created agency has taken over airport security and determining the effectiveness of this agency is years away. Early reports have suggested the new federally employed screeners at airports are more proficient at their positions than their privately employed predecessors. At the same time, other reports are claiming the government has not done enough and has been performing at substandard levels.

Before the United States was violently attacked on September 11, 2001, many Americans thought they were safe. Many people never even gave a second thought to flying in an airplane. But one fateful morning, a brutal act of terrorism changed the serene world many Americans lived in. From that moment on, people have been afraid and paranoid when it comes to air travel. Security measures have been increased and people are once again beginning to fly. Until more statistics are accumulated and the TSA has

had enough time to work all of the bugs out of their system, the public is going to have to sit back and wait to determine the effectiveness of the new airline security procedures.

Appendix A



Travelers &
Consumers

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Travelers & Consumers

Passenger Security Checkpoints

Passenger checkpoints are now the second checkpoints you will encounter.

You must pass through this checkpoint to access your departure gate. Se screeners will screen you and your carry-on baggage. You should find this screening process familiar, although enhanced security measures are in p

The passenger checkpoint includes 3 primary steps you may want to beco familiar with:

Step 1. X-ray machine

At the passenger security checkpoint, you will place all carry-on baggage any items you are carrying with you on the belt of the X-ray machine. Yo need to lay all items flat.

Laptop computers must be removed from their carrying cases and placed one of the bins provided. You will also need to remove your outer coat or jacket and place it in one of the bins. These items go through the X-ray machine.

"IN - OUT - OFF"

- Place all metal items IN your carry-on baggage before you reach th front of the line.
- Take your computer OUT of its carrying case and place it in one of bins provided.
- Take OFF your outer coat or jacket so that it can go through the X-machine (you do not need to remove your suit jacket, sport coat, o blazer unless you are asked to do so by one of the passenger scree

Step 2. Walk-through metal detector

You will next walk through a metal detector, (or you may request a pat-d inspection instead). Objects on your clothing or person containing metal i set off the alarm on the metal detector.

You will undergo a secondary screening if you set off the alarm on the m detector, or if you are chosen for additional screening. (See below)

TIP: Pack all metal items, including the contents of your pockets, in your

carry-on baggage. Mobile phones, pagers, keys, lighters, and loose change are examples of items containing metal.

If you refuse to be screened at any point during the screening process, the screener must deny you entry beyond the screening area. You will not be able to fly.

Step 3. Secondary screening

Secondary screening occurs when an individual sets off the alarm on the metal detector, or if he or she is selected for additional screening. This screening includes a hand-wand inspection in conjunction with a pat-down inspection.

If you must go through a secondary screening, the screener will direct you from the metal detector to a screening station where he or she will brief you on the next steps.

- At this time, you should let the screener know of any personal needs you may have due to a religious or cultural consideration, disability, or medical concern.
- Except in extraordinary circumstances, a screener of your gender will conduct your secondary screening. You may request that your search be conducted in private.

While you will be separated from your carry-on baggage during this process, every effort will be made to help you maintain visual contact with your carry-on bags.

Hand-Wand Inspection

The hand-wand inspection helps the screener to identify what may have set off the alarm on the metal detector. During the wand inspection procedure, you will be asked to stand with your feet apart and the screener will pass the wand over your entire body without actually touching you with the wand. Every effort will be taken to do this as discretely as possible. Please take note of the following:

- Areas of the body that have body piercings, thick hair, hats, and other items may require a pat-down inspection.
- You may ask to remove your body piercing in private as an alternative to the pat-down search.
- The screener may ask you to open your belt buckle as part of the inspection process.
- The screener may ask you to remove your shoes, and your shoes may be X-rayed separately.

TIP: It is recommended (but not a requirement) that individuals with a pacemaker, or other device that is likely to alarm the metal detector, bring medical identification verifying the condition. This may help to expedite the screening process.

Your Carry-On Baggage

If your bag is selected for secondary screening, it may be opened and examined on a table in your presence. Please DO NOT attempt to assist the screener during the search, and do not attempt to retrieve the item before the screener has advised you that the search is complete and your baggage is cleared.

Your baggage might also be inspected with an Explosive Trace Detection machine (ETD), which is separate from the X-ray machine.

Pat-Down Inspection

A pat-down inspection complements the hand-wand inspection. In order to ensure security, this inspection may include sensitive areas of the body. Screeners are rigorously trained to maintain the highest levels of professionalism.

You may request that your pat-down inspection be conducted in private.

Transportation Security Administration

[Privacy Policy](#) :

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Appendix B



Smart Security Saves Time



Permitted and Prohibited Items

Prohibited items are weapons, explosives, incendiaries, and include items that are seemingly harmless but may be used as weapons—the so-called “dual use” items. You may not bring these items to security checkpoints without authorization.

If you bring a prohibited item to the checkpoint, you may be criminally and/or civilly prosecuted or, at the least, asked to rid yourself of the item. A screener and/or Law Enforcement Officer will make this determination, depending on what the item is and the circumstances. This is because bringing a prohibited item to a security checkpoint—even accidentally—is illegal.

Your prohibited item may be detained for use in an investigation and, if necessary, as evidence in your criminal and/or civil prosecution. If permitted by the screener or Law Enforcement Officer, you may be allowed to: consult with the airlines for possible assistance in placing the prohibited item in checked baggage; withdraw with the item from the screening checkpoint at that time; make other arrangements for the item, such as taking it to your car; or, voluntarily abandon the item. Items that are voluntarily abandoned cannot be recovered and will not be returned to you.

The following chart outlines items that are permitted and items that are prohibited in your carry-on or checked baggage. You should note that some items are allowed in your checked baggage, but not your carry-on. Also pay careful attention to the “Notes” included at the bottom of each section – they contain important information about restrictions.

The prohibited and permitted items chart is not intended to be all-inclusive and is updated as necessary. To ensure everyone’s security, the screener may determine that an item not on the prohibited items chart is prohibited. In addition, the screener may also determine that an item on the permitted chart is dangerous and therefore may not be brought through the security checkpoint.

The chart applies to flights originating within the United States. Please check with your airline or travel agent for restrictions at destinations outside of the United States.

For updates and for more information, visit our website at www.TSATravelTips.us or call our Consumer Response Center toll-free at 1-866-289-9673 or email TellTSA@tsa.dot.gov.



Transportation Security
Administration



Smart Security Saves Time

Can I take it?	Carry-on	Checked
Personal Items		
Cigar Cutters	Yes	Yes
Corkscrews	Yes	Yes
Cuticle Cutters	Yes	Yes
Eyeglass Repair Tools (including screwdrivers)	Yes	Yes
Eyelash Curlers	Yes	Yes
Knitting and Crochet Needles	Yes	Yes
Knives, round-bladed butter or plastic	Yes	Yes
Nail Clippers	Yes	Yes
Nail Files	Yes	Yes
Personal care or toiletries with aerosols, in limited quantities (such as hairsprays, deodorants)	Yes	Yes
Safety Razors (including disposable razors)	Yes	Yes
Scissors-plastic or metal with blunt tips	Yes	Yes
Scissors-metal with pointed tips	No	Yes
Toy Transformer Robots	Yes	Yes
Toy Weapons (if not realistic replicas)	Yes	Yes
Tweezers	Yes	Yes
Umbrellas (allowed in carry-on baggage once they have been inspected to ensure that prohibited items are not concealed)	Yes	Yes
Walking Canes (allowed in carry-on baggage once they have been inspected to ensure that prohibited items are not concealed)	Yes	Yes
Note Some <u>personal care items containing aerosol</u> are regulated as hazardous materials. The FAA regulates hazardous materials. This information is summarized at http://cas.faa.gov/these.html		
Medication and Special Needs Devices		
Braille Note-Taker, Slate and Stylus, Augmentation Devices	Yes	Yes
Diabetes-Related Supplies/Equipment , (once inspected to ensure prohibited items are not concealed) including: insulin and insulin loaded dispensing products; vials or box of individual vials; jet injectors; pens; infusers; and preloaded syringes; and an unlimited number of unused syringes, when accompanied by insulin; lancets; blood glucose meters; blood glucose meter test strips; insulin pumps; and insulin pump supplies. Insulin in any form or dispenser must be properly marked with a professionally printed label identifying the medication or manufacturer's name or pharmaceutical label.	Yes	Yes
Nitroglycerine pills or spray for medical use (if properly marked with a professionally printed label identifying the medication or manufacturer's name or pharmaceutical label)	Yes	Yes
Prosthetic Device Tools and Appliances , including drill, allen wrenches, pullsleeves used to put on or remove prosthetic devices, if carried by the individual with the prosthetic device or his or her companion	Yes	Yes





Smart Security Saves Time

Can I take it?	Carry-on	Checked
Electronic Devices		
Camcorders	Yes	Yes
Camera Equipment	Yes	Yes
The checked baggage screening equipment will damage undeveloped film in camera equipment. We recommend that you either put undeveloped film and cameras containing undeveloped film in your carry-on baggage or take undeveloped film with you to the checkpoint and ask the screener to conduct a hand-inspection.		
Laptop Computers	Yes	Yes
Mobile Phones	Yes	Yes
Pagers	Yes	Yes
Personal Data Assistants (PDA's)	Yes	Yes
Note Check with your airline or travel agent for restrictions on the use of these and other electronic items during your flight.		
Sharp Objects		
Box Cutters	No	Yes
Ice Axes/Ice Picks	No	Yes
Knives (any length and type except round-bladed, butter, and plastic cutlery)	No	Yes
Meat Cleavers	No	Yes
Razor-Type Blades , such as box cutters, utility knives, razor blades not in a cartridge, <u>but excluding safety razors</u>	No	Yes
Sabers	No	Yes
Scissors – metal with pointed tips	No	Yes
Scissors with plastic or metal blunt tips are permitted in your carry-on.		
Swords	No	Yes
Note Any sharp objects in checked baggage should be sheathed or securely wrapped to prevent injury to baggage handlers and inspectors.		
Sporting Goods		
Baseball Bats	No	Yes
Bows and Arrows	No	Yes
Cricket Bats	No	Yes
Golf Clubs	No	Yes
Hockey Sticks	No	Yes
Lacrosse Sticks	No	Yes
Pool Cues	No	Yes
Ski Poles	No	Yes
Spear Guns	No	Yes
Note Any sharp objects in checked baggage should be sheathed or securely wrapped to prevent injury to baggage handlers and security screeners.		





Smart Security Saves Time

Can I take it?	Carry-on	Checked
Guns and Firearms		
Ammunition	No	Yes
Check with your airline or travel agent to see if ammunition is permitted in checked baggage on the airline you are flying. If ammunition is permitted, it must be declared to the airline at check-in. Small arms ammunitions for personal use must be securely packed in fiber, wood or metal boxes, or other packaging specifically designed to carry small amounts of ammunition. Ask about limitations or fees, if any, that apply.		
BB guns	No	Yes
Compressed Air Guns	No	Yes
Firearms	No	Yes
Flare Guns	No	No
Gun Lighters	No	No
Gun Powder	No	No
Parts of Guns and Firearms	No	Yes
Pellet Guns	No	Yes
Realistic Replicas of Firearms	No	Yes
Starter Pistols	No	Yes
Note Check with your airline or travel agent to see if firearms are permitted in checked baggage on the airline you are flying. Ask about limitations or fees, if any, that apply. Firearms carried as checked baggage MUST be unloaded, packed in a locked hard-sided gun case, and declared to the airline at check-in. Only you, the passenger, may have the key or combination.		
Tools		
Axes and Hatchets	No	Yes
Cattle Prods	No	Yes
Crowbars	No	Yes
Hammers	No	Yes
Drills (including cordless portable power drills)	No	Yes
Saws (including cordless portable power saws)	No	Yes
Screwdrivers (except those in eyeglass repair kits)	No	Yes
Tools (including but not limited to wrenches and pliers)	No	Yes
Wrenches and Pliers	No	Yes
Note Any sharp objects in checked baggage should be sheathed or securely wrapped to prevent injury to baggage handlers and security screeners.		
Martial Arts/Self Defense Items		
Billy Clubs	No	Yes
Black Jacks	No	Yes
Brass Knuckles	No	Yes
Kubaton	No	Yes
Mace/Pepper Spray	No	Yes
One 118 ml or 4 Fl. oz. container of <u>mace or pepper spray</u> is permitted in checked baggage provided it is equipped with a safety mechanism to prevent accidental discharge. For more information on these and other hazardous materials, visit http://cas.faa.gov/these.html .		
Martial Arts Weapons	No	Yes
Night Sticks	No	Yes
Nunchakus	No	Yes





Smart Security Saves Time

Can I take it?	Carry-on	Checked
Martial Arts/Self Defense Items		
Stun Guns/Shocking Devices	No	Yes
Throwing Stars	No	Yes
Note Any sharp objects in checked baggage should be sheathed or securely wrapped to prevent injury to baggage handlers and security screeners.		
Explosive Materials		
Blasting caps	No	No
Dynamite	No	No
Fireworks	No	No
Flares in any form	No	No
Hand Grenades	No	No
Plastic Explosives	No	No
Flammable Items		
Aerosol (any except for personal care or toiletries in limited quantities)	No	No
Fuels (including cooking fuels and any flammable liquid fuel)	No	No
Gasoline	No	No
Gas Torches	No	No
Lighter Fluid	No	No
Strike-anywhere Matches	No	No
Turpentine and paint thinner	No	No
Note There are other hazardous materials that are regulated by the FAA. This information is summarized at http://cas.faa.gov/these.html		
Disabling Chemicals and Other Dangerous Items		
Chlorine for pools and spas	No	No
Compressed Gas Cylinders (including fire extinguishers)	No	No
Liquid Bleach	No	No
Spillable Batteries (except those in wheelchairs)	No	No
Spray Paint	No	No
Tear Gas	No	No
Note There are other hazardous materials that are regulated by the FAA. This information is summarized at http://cas.faa.gov/these.html		



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